

# SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT

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NEWSLETTER OF THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

FALL 2003

## McKeen Car Power Plant Selected



The McKeen car. Photo from the recently acquired Sampson Collection. NSRM Collection

**By Chris deWitt**

The McKeen car's completion date is not too far over the distant horizon. Towards the eventual completion, we are pursuing the design of the power truck. Milt Neilson, restoration volunteer, has been diligently working on the drive system. Ideally, the original engine would be used. This is not possible, as the engine was scrapped. The Museum has not been able to locate a surviving McKeen engine although over 200 were manufactured. Because the power plant cannot be original, the restoration moves toward a suitable

facsimile. Many factors will determine the design of the power plant. The primary concerns are performance and the visual appeal the final product.

Certain details are dictated by the original design. It was decided that the performance of the power plant met the following criteria:

1. The powerplant is to fit into the original design of the truck frame.
2. The drive was to be of all new components.

3. The operating speeds were to be up to 80 mph.

4. The top speed could be limited.

5. A specific starting torque was necessary.

6. Appropriate air for brakes and sundry is required.

It is desirable to use the design of the front truck as drawn by McKeen to give the original appearance even though the drive is modern.

-Continued on page 3

## Kodak To Discontinue Slide Projectors and Accessories in 2004

Eastman Kodak Company has confirmed plans to discontinue the manufacture and sales of slide projection products and accessories in June of 2004. This early disclosure is being made to key user groups in order to allow time for adoption of a replacement technology or purchase of backup slide projector products.

Many Railfans maintain their collections on slides and will be affected by this change. There has been much discussion on the particular merits of maintaining images in slide form or digitizing and using the images for archival use. This announcement will surely help railfans make the transition.

The KODAK products included in this event are CAROUSEL, EKTAGRAPHIC, EKTALITE and EKTAPRO slide projectors and all KODAK Slide Projector accessories. The current plan is to cease manufacturing in June 2004. Kodak anticipates that small quantities of new Carousel, Ektographic, Ektalite and Ektapro slide projectors will be available through the end of 2004. In addition, the Kodak distributor, Comm-Tec, in Germany plans to sell Ektapro projectors

and accessories beyond 2004. Kodak will offer service and support for slide projectors until 2011.

Slide projectors continue to be used in many government applications due to a proven track record of cost-effective, reliable, high-quality image projection. Combining the seven years of service and support with a long history of trouble-free operation, means that slide projectors will continue to enjoy many years of productive use.

Investigating and installing replacement technologies can be a challenging and costly effort with a long implementation timeline. So, many may wish to purchase backup units for currently installed slide projectors while making the transition. Upcoming government budgeting activities make it prudent to pre-disclose now in order to allow ample time to include slide projector demand in the government budgeting plans for 2004.

Making Kodak aware of your future requirements will insure that there is enough products on hand before production ends. You can do this by contacting Glenn Prince, Kodak Account Manager, Government Markets (678) 339-0723, glenn.prince@kodak.com .

## Railroad Museum Increases Admission Fees.

The Nevada State Railroad Museum will increase its admissions fees on October 1, 2003. The new rates are \$4.00 for adults and \$3.00 for seniors. Children 17 and under will still be admitted for free.

The Nevada State Board of Museums and History, which governs the Nevada State Railroad Museum, made the announcement at the September board meeting. The Board reviews the fees annually. This is the first increase for the Railroad Museum in the past ten years.

## When a locomotive engineer retires, what may become his hobby? Model trains?

No. When he was driving past the railroad museum in Carson City, he became a volunteer.

His career was with the Southern Pacific/Union Pacific in the Western Division based in Oakland. Freight service would find him operating to Watsonville Junction on the Coast Division, south into the San Joaquin Valley or north towards Sacramento.

When he had enough of running diesel locomotives, he decided to switch to juice power and became an operator on the famous BART system. Each train had only one

employed person on board, and that was the operator. If anything went wrong, the operator had to find it and fix it, even if it was in the last car, such as the car not closing properly. Enough of that convinced him to retire. We'd like to introduce John Guild who is a volunteer in many different areas at the museum. He's an amazing storyteller of the high iron, but does it all: working in the annex, talking to people in



the main building, or selling tickets for the train  
*The Yard Bull*

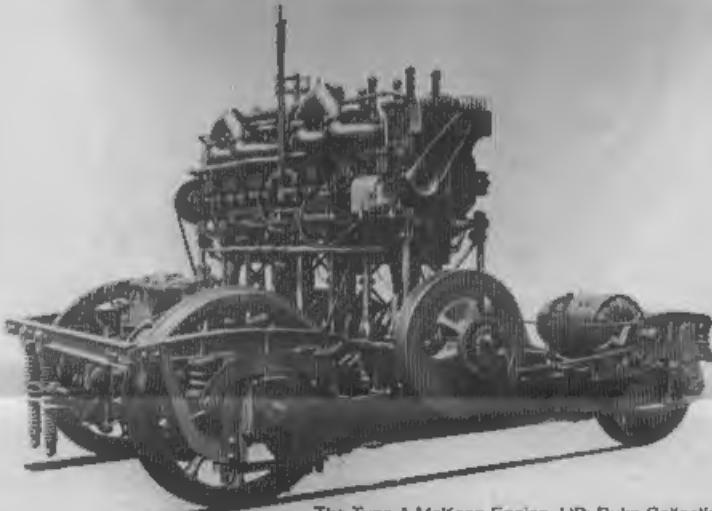
the original operating specifications. Setting the upper speed limit of the system at the discretion of chief mechanical officer was to prevent overzealous individuals from exceeding the safe operating speed of the road at NSRM.

horsepower. To develop this horsepower conveniently, a diesel engine is indicated. Both Caterpillar and Cummins build an appropriate model. Transferring the horsepower to the wheel can be done elegantly through hydraulics. Hydrostatic drive systems

cation. The drive system is comprised of a prime mover (diesel engine), a hydraulic pump driven by the prime mover, hoses connecting the pump to a radial piston hydraulic motor driving a large "bicycle" style chain to the driven axle. The operator's controls, air pumps and cooling systems are to be applied as is convenient and expedient. Specifying matching components became the next major task in the design.

To date, Milt has designed a structural system to support a diesel engine and the arrangement of components driven by the engine. He is also developing a list of components by manufacturer's part numbers and soliciting prices. The shop is poised to start construction of the truck frame upon final design and approval by all parties involved. The shop has started to amass components for the truck. A pattern for the spoked front wheel was made and sent out to the foundry. Delivery of castings was made in July. They are cast

in gray cast iron. Machining of the wheels is pending. When the final outside diameter is established the steel tires will be ordered. The axle is to follow immediately. Mean while, the various other components are to be fabricated as they were for the rear truck. It is our intention to be well underway by the beginning of



The Type A McKeen Engine. UP: Duke Collection  
Neg #485

The starting torque is the power required to start the McKeen car fully loaded on the steepest grade we might find.

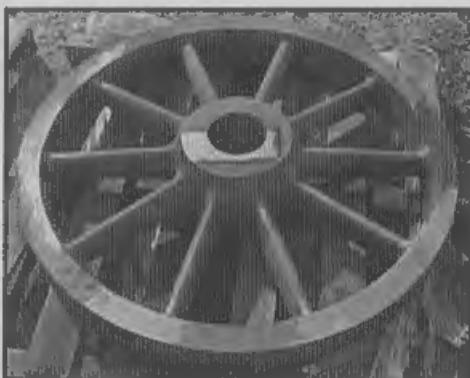
The air requirements for brakes need to be provided. Although this car was meant to go, it would be nice to stop. The whistle requires almost as much air as do the brakes, although this may sound odd.

Working from McKeen's drawings of the front truck, and considering the frame design, placement of the bolster, and wheelbase, Milt has prepared a satisfactory configuration.

Assuming the weight of the car fully laden, the adhesion of the wheels on the rails and the maximum grade expected the horsepower required to develop sufficient starting torque is about 200 horsepower. Coincidentally the original engine was rated at 200

are used extensively in construction equipment as well as industrial appli-

winter.



The new McKeen driving centers.

## Sampson Collection purchased by Friends



Left to right: Patrick Allen, Roadmaster; Gordon A. Sampson, Howard Peterson, Reno photographer; Arnold Gille, Master Mechanic; Grover Russet, fireman/engineer. This work train was used for the taking of stills and motion picture film at Lakeview Mountain curve, September 17, 1949. Sampson

## Collections Acquisitions June through August

By Jane O'Cain

In August, the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum purchased Virginia & Truckee Railroad (V&T) General Manager Gordon Sampson's

private collection of objects and paper, collected between 1945-1960. The collection was donated to the Nevada State Railroad museum. These rare items will help the Museum more fully tell the stories of some of Nevada's most remarkable people.

Major Gordon Sampson was General Manager from 1945 until the

railroad's demise in 1950. Sampson was the V&T's auditor under Sam Bigelow until 1945 when Bigelow died. During Sampson's management, the V&T purchased the locomotive 2nd No. 5 from the Nevada Copper Belt, sold much rolling stock to Hollywood, and scrapped the McKeen Motor Car.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Dear Friends-*

The summer is over, can you believe it? Where does the time go? It has been a very busy season at the museum. We believe that it has been a productive one. The operating season has been extremely busy also. I want to thank all of the volunteers for their support and valuable time given to the museum.

The past four or five months have been rewarding for the museum, as the *Friends* were fortunate in obtaining an original V&T speeder, used in track maintenance, and a rare collection of documents and photos from the Gordon Sampson Collection. Also included in the collection were two of the lamps from V&T car No. 13. These are the only known lamps in existence and they are in very good condition. The Board of Directors feels fortunate that we were able to accomplish the acquisition of these two collections. We believe they are very worthwhile additions to the Museum's collection.

Well fall is here and that means Symposium time again. As always, this year's Symposium promises to be bigger and better than ever. The committee has worked long and hard at making it the best ever. I hope to see everyone there and hope that everyone is getting the reservations in, as space is limited and no one wants to be left out. All of the application materials have been sent and a large percentage have been returned. So if you have not gotten yours in yet, you better hurry.

Here's hoping to see everyone at Symposium.

- Ron Allen, President.

*- from page 1*

The decision to use all new components for the system was based on availability, dependability, flexibility of design, and maintenance. If an original power plant could not be had then anything else would not in keeping with the restoration. It was suggested by more than one person that an old, or period, prime mover be used. This was rejected out of hand. If, for

example, a 1936 Cadillac automobile was being restored and a non-Cadillac

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Steam Up

October 19  
November 28-29  
December 13-14

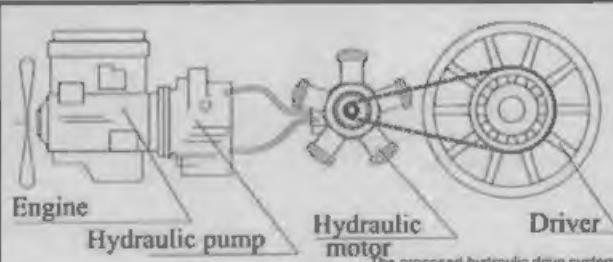
### Friends Board Meetings

October 17  
December 11

### Symposium

The Railroads of the Region  
October 17-19

Santa Train  
December 13-14



replacement engine was installed, regardless of the year of manufacture, it

would not be a Cadillac engine. The other consideration is repairs. When maintenance or repair is needed, finding old parts to repair an old engine is not worth the effort. It must be remembered that the ultimate goal is to go for a ride. The top speed was dictated by the possibility that someday there might be an opportunity to operate on a long and fast railroad. It also met

*- Continued on page 5*

The collection includes:



Two brass oil lamps dating to 1874 that were removed from V&T mail car No. 13 in January 1947; a Charmer No. 20 cast box stove dating from the 1870s that was used in the Old Washoe section house; bookends made from a rail section; a desk paperweight of the Lyon, 1947; a desk lamp crafted from a rail section by the V&T master mechanic, 1945-49; three paperweights made from V&T RR spikes; books; photographs and negatives; and papers including ledgers, newspaper clippings, telegraphs, and V&T RR passes, postcards, and financial papers.

Objects from this collection are on display in the Interpretive Center. Please stop by and see them during the symposium!

In addition, we thank the following individuals who have donated artifacts for the permanent collections:

A.B. Abernethy, San Francisco, California

Jim Cody, Reno, Nevada

Loren Jahn, Reno, Nevada

Ronnie Johnson, Carson City, Nevada

Nevada State Library and Archives, Carson City, Nevada

Lisa Pugh, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Bob Shields, Reno, Nevada

Fred Rogers, Reno, Nevada

And the following individuals who have donated materials or equipment for railroad operations or the restoration program:

Henry Reynaud, Petaluma, California

Ken Hopple, Reno, Nevada

Stan and Elaine Cronwall, Reno, Nevada

